



"Although we may be oceans apart, I know that I will forever cherish the friendships I made and always look back with fond and loving memories of my time spent in Ghana. ."
- Eunie Lee, Ghana volunteer

Ghana

The Country

Ghana is rich with the traditions of West African culture. The clan system thrives and works in parallel with the democratically elected government. Traditional West African music, religious drumming and dancing are also common in Ghana. While the country is famed for such musical and cultural traditions, colorful cloth and hand carved fertility dolls, you will find that the most enjoyable part of your visit to Ghana is its people.

Ghanaians are proud of their history and culture. Visiting with volunteers is seen as a great opportunity to break down stereotypes about West Africa. You likely will find yourself in long discussions with the people you meet. The time you spend sharing will be rewarded, for Ghanaians have a unique worldview and the best way to understand it is to make friends.

The Community

Cross-Cultural Solutions operates in the Volta Region, the heart of the Ewe tribe. The Volta Region is one of Ghana's most picturesque, with a lush landscape and low, rolling mountains. In this region, you will come across old slave forts, indicative of Ghana's darker past, and many farms and local fishing areas.

A variety of environments can be found in the region, from bustling cities to more typical rural villages and terraced farms where people reside in mud or cement houses and get their water from a town well or nearby stream. The region also includes several small farming and fishing villages along the coast of the African Gulf.

The People

Known for having a relaxed manner, Ghanaians just may be the happiest people on earth. They love to laugh and do not like to rush, as time is never an issue. In fact, interrupting a discussion or breaking up a moment between friends to get to an appointment is unheard of. This can come as quite an adjustment for many volunteers who are used to rushing rather than focusing on relationships.

While they have few material possessions, Ghanaians possess a strong sense of family and community responsibility. They are hospitable and friendly to foreigners, which is not surprising given that the basis of Ghanaian life is an appreciation for taking time to visit with others. Rather than making a phone call to conduct business, most Ghanaians would prefer to wait and meet with the person face-to-face.

Ghana Staff

Cross-Cultural Solutions' local staff designs and runs each program; the staff will make you feel at home during your stay and help you to better understand the culture. They help to facilitate your placement and activities and are always available to handle any questions that may arise.

Makafui Amenuvor, CCS Ghana Country Director, was born and raised in the Volta Region of Ghana, Makafui began working with CCS in 1998 when he joined the team as the Office Manager. Prior to becoming Country Director, Makafui also held the title of founding Program Director in Hohoe, Ghana. He has also studied and lived in both Canada and the U.S., and holds a bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems.

The Cross-Cultural Solutions Experience in Ghana

Volunteer Work

Volunteers in Ghana are involved with teaching children, teaching English, assisting teachers, working toward women's empowerment, sharing their professional skills/experience, observing and assisting local medical professionals, assisting special education teachers, and caring for infants and children in daycare centers and orphanages. Placements in Ghana tend to be less structured than typical work placements, with time to share and learn.

Volunteer work is always in partnership with one of CCS' Partner Programs from the local community. Your placement is based on your skills and interests and the needs of the community; the most common include:

- Teaching: Volunteers provide extra support by teaching children, teaching English, or assisting special education teachers. Volunteers can work with a wide range of age groups, from pre-K to high school classes. Basic subjects like English and math are valued, and there may also be opportunities to teach more specialized subjects like computers or trade skills, as well as creative activities such as dance, visual art, and creative writing.
- Assisting Health Professionals: Opportunities are available in hospitals and health clinics, where volunteers can observe and assist health care professionals. Volunteers can work with people affected by HIV/AIDS in special clinics or HIV/AIDS wards of hospitals.
- Working Toward Women's Empowerment: Volunteers help further community development by partnering with local microfinance NGOs. Independent cultural research projects may also be available, depending on your interests. Before arriving, you will need a clear idea of what you want to study and how you would like to approach your project.

Cultural & Learning Activities

In Ghana, Cultural & Learning Activities offered include an in-depth orientation, insightful discussions with staff and local experts on cultural norms, guest speakers and special events. Speakers may include a local practitioner of herbal medicine or the Director of the Center of National Culture. Special events may include a performance of traditional drumming or dancing or a lesson in batik making. There are also regular excursions to nearby areas of interest, such as waterfalls, mountains, and monkey sanctuaries.

Free Time

Free time is available some afternoons and evenings, and every weekend. Many volunteers spend free time playing with the local children or visiting with people in smaller villages throughout the region, or hiking in the area. On weekends, you may want to visit the Wli Waterfall, one of the highest waterfalls in Africa or visit other villages to watch the fishermen pull in their daily catch in large nets. Many volunteers also like to explore the historical slave forts near Cape Coast, or take an ecological canopy walk tour of the rainforest in Kakum National Park.

Home-Base in Ghana

Our Home-Base provides you with a family atmosphere and a safe, comfortable place to reflect on your experience. Basic amenities (like linens and running water) are provided.

The Cross-Cultural Solutions Home-Base in Ghana is located in a quiet neighborhood about a 10 minute walk from the central part of town. There are two different compounds adjacent to each other. The main house contains five bedrooms, a spacious communal dining room, a kitchen, three bathrooms and an open porch. The second house contains three bedrooms, a bathroom, and an office for the staff. Each bedroom can sleep four to six people. Toilets are western style and there are standing showers in all the bathrooms.

Volunteer meals are provided by local cooks and include a small tasting of traditional Ghanaian dishes such as *fufu* (a mash of plantains and cassava) and porridges. Dishes like chicken or vegetables and rice are also provided for volunteers. Transportation to and from your Placement and any Cultural & Learning Activities is provided by licensed CCS staff drivers.

Programs Available in Ghana

- Volunteer Abroad program (2 to 12 weeks)
- Intern Abroad program (5 to 12 weeks)
- Insight Abroad program (1 week)